

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FACILITIES DIVISION

Employee Update No. 8
August 22, 2000

INNOVATIVE FACILITIES SUPPORT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY!

~ FD Slogan~

Nearing Completion

The construction of the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Sciences Center (SVASC) is nearing completion. Construction is expected to be complete this fall. This new facility will replace the Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory facilities in Fresno, California. The project is a new energy efficient agricultural science center facility that is located on a 104-acre tract in Parlier, California. Research programs at the new laboratory will emphasize efficient utilization and conservation of water, soil, and other biological resources; development of new export markets; finding chemical and non-chemical alternatives for preplant and postharvest uses of methyl bromide; development of new methods to maintain quality and extend market life of horticultural crops; and breeding of new varieties of deciduous crops with better eating quality, storage life, shipping market windows, and resistance to pests.

The 78,000 square-foot facility consists of two one story laboratory wings, two one story administrative wings, four pre-engineered secondary outbuildings, and a headhouse/greenhouse building. The design of the SVASC incorporated the latest laboratory standards in the industry, state-of-the-art telecommunications system, storage and security systems, as well as energy efficient mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems.

Hugene Fields, Facilities Engineering Branch (FEB), and Tony Wimbush, Facilities Contacts Branch (FCB), managed the design and construction of this project. Ira Craig, Real Property Management Branch (RPMB), was the realty specialist responsible for acquiring the land for the new lab.

A dedication ceremony for the new laboratory is being planned for October 27, 2000. The total project cost, including design and construction is over \$25 million.

Semiannual Facilities Division (FD) Outstanding Employee Award

Barbara Brown, Space Management Specialist in RPMB, received the Semiannual FD Outstanding Award in May for providing superb space management services to NASS. Congratulations Barbara for a job well done!

Nominations for the next semiannual FD Outstanding Employee Award will be requested shortly. Nominations may be submitted by FD employees or by an FD customer.

This is an important FD award that began in February 1987 and was designed to recognize nonsupervisory FD employees who have gone the extra mile in delivering facility services to our customers. Please think back over the past 6 months and consider nominating someone that you believe has demonstrated outstanding customer service--these can be FD employees you have worked with directly, or employees whose work you have

observed.

Contact Support for Environmental Projects

One of the goals of the Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Branch (SHEMB), was to ensure ARS has adequate contract support for environmental requirements. SHEMB identified and evaluated many possibilities such as agreements with other Federal agencies, in-house contracts, and services provided through the General Services Administration (GSA). It was decided that a combination of methods would be the best way to ensure adequate contract services are available. SHEMB will retain its existing agreement with the Department of Energy, but also obtain the services of an 8(a) contractor for remediation services, and another contractor through a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) with GSA to perform investigative services. Through the diligent efforts of FCB, nearly all required actions have been completed, and

the Agency will have a variety of environmental contract choices for years to come.

A particular benefit was that the BPA through GSA is with Entech Inc., an 8(a) company which has been doing most of the SHEMB contract work over the past 5

years. Since their contract expires on August 31, 2000, the procurement was particularly advantageous in that the projects will now continue uninterrupted. Entech has won two awards for work performed with ARS. In 1997, they were named the Small Disadvantaged Business Contractor of the year, and in 1998, they received the U.S. Small Business Administration's "Administrator's Award for Excellence."

Changes in FD

Patricia Lockhart joined RPMB in April as a temporary employee for 3 months. Patricia's contract has been extended until April 2001. Patricia's duties include reserving conference rooms and providing office support to the real property and space management specialists.

Bob Manns, RPMB, accepted a job with GSA in Washington, D.C., in May. **Ingrid Charlton**, RPMB, accepted a job at NAA in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, in April.

Seitu Bryson's appointment will end on September 1. Seitu was hired under the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) as a computer aide for the Division. FD wishes Seitu good luck in completing his education and appreciates the work he did during his employment with the Division! **Ahmed Huq** will replace Seitu as the Division student computer aide starting September 11. Ahmed will be hired under the STEP as well. He is currently a senior at Bowie State University majoring in computer science. Welcome aboard Ahmed!

Small Business Awards Ceremony

The annual Small Business Awards Ceremony was held on May 23, 2000, at the Jamie Whitten Building. Alan Connell, FCB, and Eugene Fields, FEB, attended the ceremony sponsored by the USDA Office of

Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). Sharon Harris, OSDBU Director, presided over the event. Representatives from the Office of the Secretary and U.S. House of Representatives were speakers at the ceremony. Two Small Business Awards were given to 8(a) firms under ARS contracts: Selmon Enterprises, Inc., Norman, Oklahoma, and McCall & Associates, San Antonio, Texas. Selmon Enterprises, Inc., received an award for providing outstanding construction services on Buildings 45, 67, and 70 at the ARS Grazing Lands Research Facility, El Reno, Oklahoma. This was a \$1.8 million renovation project administered by Eugene Fields, FEB, and Alan Connell, FCB.

McCall & Associates was recognized for outstanding design and construction management services under an Indefinite Quantity contract issued by SPA. Carolyn Williams, SPA Engineer, and Mike Downing, SPA Contracting Officer, oversee this contract.

Results of FD Customer Survey is on the Web!

FD conducted a Customer Survey in February in accordance with the 1998 AFM Strategic Plan. Customers had an opportunity to rate services provided by FD and provide feedback in five functional areas:

- C Facilities Engineering and Contracting
- C Real Property Management
- C Space Management
- C Safety, Health, and Environmental
- C Budget Preparation (support to BPMS)

The rating factors were Unacceptable, Poor, Acceptable, Good, and Outstanding. FD's customer base consisted of the eight ARS Areas and NAL, AFM Senior Management and Division Directors, ERS, CSREES, NASS, NPS, and BPMS.

The results of the survey indicate that

overall FD is doing a GOOD job. Customers are most pleased with:

- C Space management
- C Building & Facilities budget preparation
- C The interaction of Area Safety & Health Managers with the Safety, Health, & Environment Management Staff.

The survey did however point out areas that need improvement. FD has developed an Action Plan to address these concerns, which can be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/fd/custsurv.xls.htm>. This plan will be updated quarterly.

Strategic Plan Update

Since the last employee update, FD has completed all goals in objectives 1 and 5 of the 1998 AFM Strategic Plan. The last goal completed involved developing a plan outlining procedures to determine A-E accountability for design errors and implement measures for corrective design actions and recovery of monetary

damages to the Government. These procedures were published in July 2000.

All employees should start thinking about the next cycle of Strategic Plan goals. If you have any suggestions on what you think the Division needs to work on to improve services, please let your branch chief know.

FD Branch Goals Update

The FD Branches identified goals that are scheduled to be accomplished December 31, 2000. Updates are italicized below.

Contracting:

- C Improve Procurement Assistant effectiveness of support to Contracting Officers (CO). *Work in progress.*
- C Investigate alternative A-E and contractor performance rating systems. *Assigned. Pending meeting with Corps of Engineers.*
- C Develop CO procedures manual. *To be assigned early in FY 2001.*
- C Develop additional contract verbiage to add design/build capability to new A-E and Indefinite Quantity Contracts. *To be assigned. Joint effort w/FEB.*
- C Explore insurance options on construction contracts. *Complete and implemented April 2000.*

Engineering:

- C Re-write generic Scope of Work for A-E Services. *Complete and implemented March 2000.*
- C Complete Phase II of the A-E accountability PET. *Assigned.*
- C Publish an Engineering Project Manager Handbook. *Draft under review.*
- C Review current policy on payment of design review and permitting fees by local entities. *Work in progress.*
- C Successful close out of construction projects and develop lessons learned from recently completed construction projects. *To be assigned.*

Real Property and Space:

- C Complete the relocation of CSREES and NASS employees (Waterfront Center and South Building). *CSREES: Target move*

date is November. Actual move date to be established. NASS: training room move delayed until FY 2001. Target move date for the training room has not been established. All other relocations are complete.

- C Complete an Interagency Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation and implement the Quarters Management and Information System at the Headquarters and Area level. *Agreement is in place. Training is in progress.*
- C Standardize user fees for the use of ARS controlled land and facilities. *Draft Bulletin sent out in August for review.*
- C Initiate rewrite of Manual 245.1, ARS, Real Property Management. *Delayed until FY 2001 due to staffing shortages.*
- C Initiate the interface of the Real Property Management Information System with the redesign of the Resource Management Information System (RMIS). *Work in progress.*

Safety Health and Environmental:

- C Design and develop safety, health, and environmental management related education/training packages for USDA Safety Management Conference. *On hold until FY 2001.*
- C Develop and implement the ARS Industrial Hygiene Program. *Draft implementation plan out for review and comment.*
- C Ensure ARS has adequate contract support for environmental requirements. *Complete. Contract support in place in July.*
- C Develop SHEM related standard operating procedures for inclusion in Manual 230.0 and for use as training documents at the Safety Conference. *Target completion date is March 2001. Schedule being developed.*

Space Update

RPMB Space Management Team has been busy as usual. Here's the latest on move activities downtown:

CSREES Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management moved from Aerospace to the second floor of the Waterfront Center in April.

Space on the first floor of the Waterfront building has been identified for CSREES, Joint Institute for Food Safety Research. Construction is expected to be complete October 6

NASS Census Division moved to the newly renovated third wing of the South Building in May as scheduled. The new offices are located on the fifth and sixth floors.

NASS, ITD, Estimation & Support Systems Branch, and Small Farms Group relocated from the first floor, fourth wing to the fourth floor, first wing in August. This move provided additional space in the fourth wing for Phase II of the South Building renovation project. FD has also started working on the relocation of the NASS training room currently located on the sixth floor of the fourth wing. This is the last step in vacating NASS space in the fourth wing in preparation of Phase II South Building renovation.

FD Space Management Staff and ITD's LAN room currently located in 1470, tailhouse section, will relocate to the third floor, rooms 3858-3870. The Department will use vacated space for the renovation of the fourth wing. Floor plans of the new space have been approved. This move is expected to take place in

October.

ARS FY 2001 Budget

The President's budget request was sent to Congress in February 2000. House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees marked up the President's budget. The House proposes a funding level of \$39,300,000 and the Senate \$56,330,000 in FY 2001 for continuing facility modernization of major research centers and new construction at the following locations:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Maricopa, AZ | Albany, CA |
| Hilo, HI | Urbana, IL |
| Ames, IA | Manhattan, KS |
| Orono, ME | Beltsville, MD |
| Stoneville, MS | Miles City, MT |
| Plum Island, NY | Logan, UT |
| NAL | National |
| | Arboretum |

The conference action will take place later this summer. In addition to the Buildings & Facilities appropriations, the proposed HWC allocation in FY 2001 is \$3.25 million. We will keep you posted on any actions as we move through the budget process.

ARS Policy Statements on Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Civil Rights

All employees should have a copy of the ARS Policy Statement on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and the ARS Policy Statement on Civil Rights, both dated July 19, 2000. These two policy statements reemphasize the Agency's 1998 position on these issues...discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace. The philosophy of the Agency is to treat all employees with dignity and respect. All employees are responsible to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the policy statements. If you do not have a copy of the policy statements, please let your branch chief know.

Upcoming Special Observances

Employees are encouraged to participate and attend special observances programs. Employees must receive approval from their supervisor to participate. Upcoming Special Observances:

- C Women's Equality Day--August 23
- C Hispanic Heritage Month--September 15 - October 15
- C Disability Employment Awareness Month--October
- C Anniversary of the Dedication of the George Washington Carver Center--October 4
- C Native American Heritage Month--November

For more specific information about the programs, please call Carolyn Moore or Darlene Butler on 301- 504-6507 or visit the ARS EE/CR office website <http://www.ars.usda.gov/eeo/>.

We Need Articles!

If you have any articles or suggestions to improve the FD Newsletter, let Valencia or Pat know.

Election Year 2000

Remember--If you don't vote, you don't count!